

Media Release Thursday 29 May 2003

Church offers apology

The Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Ian George, tonight (Thursday, May 29) apologised to people wounded through sexual abuse, and to the community, on behalf of the Diocese of Adelaide.

At tonight's opening session of the annual Church Synod in Adelaide, Archbishop George said "I want to publicly acknowledge the hurt that has been done to a large number of people, the individuals whom Brandenburg abused, and families who are living with the consequences.

"I apologise unreservedly to those who have been so wounded, and to the community, and promise you that we will do everything we can to assist in the healing of those wounds.

"We are ashamed and apologise that our processes were sometimes inadequate."

Archbishop George said "I want to assure the diocese and the general community that our prime concern is the wellbeing and healing of people affected by this appalling behaviour.

"We will do everything in our power to assist the healing process and ensure the protection of children and young people."

Archbishop George's apology was delivered to a packed St. Peter's Cathedral to members of Synod the governing council of the Church, ecumenical and government representatives.

The apology was offered because of the "predatory behaviour" of Robert Brandenburg, a lay person employed by a Church organisation, who was found drowned some time after being charged by the police in 1999.

Archbishop George said "We now know that his abuse took place over a long period of time, perhaps three decades or more, and involved a significant but as yet unknown number of boys and young men.

"Sexual abuse is abhorrent and totally unacceptable in the life of our church and our community."

Archbishop George said "We are saddened by the suffering endured by so many.

"We confess that there have been times when we have not acted with the compassion of God and we have met human suffering with too little concern."

The Diocese has established an independent, out-sourced sexual abuse helpline number – 8305 9383